

Four Things Every Jesus Follower Needs to Know

A QUICK LOOK BACK

THE PASSAGE

Mark 4:1-34

FOUR THINGS EVERY JESUS FOLLOWER NEEDS TO KNOW

- (1) Why some won't **LISTEN** and others don't **LAST**.

Mark 4:1-20/ Romans 1:18-32 & Hebrews 3:7-14/ 2 Timothy 3:12 & John 16:33
Philippians 4:6-8 & 1 Timothy 6:9-10

- (2) There are no **SECRETS**.

Mark 4:21-25/ Luke 8:16/ John 3:19-21

- (3) God is at **WORK**, even when we can't **SEE IT**.

Mark 4:26-29/ Matthew 16:18/ Romans 8:28

- (4) God uses **SMALL** things to produce **GREAT** things.

Mark 4:30-34/ 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

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Life Group Study Questions

For the week of March 31, 2019

Welcome to the Spring Quarter of Life Groups!

This week we kick off our Spring Life Group Quarter. Your first meeting will most likely include a potluck dinner, time to get acquainted with any new members, as well as time to discuss the Life Group Covenant. The study questions have been shortened this week to allow ample time to accomplish each of these.

To prepare for this week's meeting, take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group. Have a great first meeting as you come together to connect and encourage one another to grow and see God change our lives from the inside out!

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- 1 In three of the four parables we looked at this weekend, Jesus used farming as the teaching point. In keeping with this agricultural theme, what would you say is your favorite plant, flower or tree?
- 2 Larry talked about '*four things every Jesus follower needs to know.*' Which of the four points is the most important for you to remember? Explain why.
- 3 Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

DIGGING DEEPER

- 1 This weekend Larry talked about how a fast start doesn't guarantee a good finish. The Old Testament king named Uzziah is a sobering example of someone who crashed and burned after a great start. After reading about him in 2 Chronicles 26:1-22, answer the following question.

2 Chronicles 26:1-22 New International Version (NIV)

Uzziah King of Judah

Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah,^[a] who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. ² He was the one who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah after Amaziah rested with his ancestors.

³ Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother's name was Jekoliah; she was from Jerusalem. ⁴ He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Amaziah had done. ⁵ He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear^[b] of God. As long as he sought the Lord, God gave him success.

⁶ He went to war against the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod. He then rebuilt towns near Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines. ⁷ God helped him against the Philistines and against the Arabs who lived in Gur Baal and against the Meunites. ⁸ The Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread as far as the border of Egypt, because he had become very powerful.

⁹ Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate and at the angle of the wall, and he fortified them. ¹⁰ He also built towers in the wilderness and dug many cisterns, because he had much livestock in the foothills and in the plain. He had people working his fields and vineyards in the hills and in the fertile lands, for he loved the soil.

¹¹ Uzziah had a well-trained army, ready to go out by divisions according to their numbers as mustered by Jeiel the secretary and Maaseiah the officer under the direction of Hananiah, one of the royal officials. ¹² The total number of family leaders over the fighting men was 2,600. ¹³ Under their command was an army of 307,500 men trained for war, a powerful force to support the king against his enemies. ¹⁴ Uzziah provided shields, spears, helmets, coats of armor, bows and slingstones for the entire army. ¹⁵ In Jerusalem he made devices invented for use on the towers and on the corner defenses so that soldiers could shoot arrows and hurl large stones from the walls. His fame spread far and wide, for he was greatly helped until he became powerful.

¹⁶ But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷ Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the Lord followed him in. ¹⁸ They confronted King Uzziah and said, "It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the Lord God."

¹⁹ Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the Lord's temple, leprosy^[a] broke out on his forehead. ²⁰ When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the Lord had afflicted him.

²¹ King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house^[a]—leprous, and banned from the temple of the Lord. Jotham his son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.

²² The other events of Uzziah's reign, from beginning to end, are recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz.

What stands out to you about Uzziah's life in the first 15 verses of this chapter?

In verse 16 we read about Uzziah's downfall. What thoughts could you imagine might have gone through his head that contributed to his downfall?

In what ways does Uzziah's downfall resemble the points Larry made in the sermon relating to the rocky and thorny soils?

Can you think of some reasons that success can lead us away from God?

How could Isaiah 57:15 and 66:1-2 help a person avoid falling prey to pride?

Isaiah 57:15 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁵ For this is what the high and exalted One says—
he who lives forever, whose name is holy:
“I live in a high and holy place,
but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly
and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Isaiah 66:1-2 New International Version (NIV)

Judgment and Hope

This is what the Lord says:
“Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.
Where is the house you will build for me?
Where will my resting place be?
² Has not my hand made all these things,
and so they came into being?”
declares the Lord.
“These are the ones I look on with favor:
those who are humble and contrite in spirit,
and who tremble at my word.

2 We heard this weekend that the Bible makes it clear we have some responsibility for the condition of our hearts because the heart of the hearer determines the fruit of the message. How could the following passages help us continue to cultivate a heart that is responsive to God and his Word?

Ephesians 4:1-3 New International Version (NIV)

Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ

⁴ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Psalms 1:1-3 New International Version (NIV)

¹ Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.

Luke 18:9-14 New International Version (NIV)

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’”

¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

TAKING IT HOME

Looking back on this week’s sermon and study, what’s most important for you to remember?

LOOKING AHEAD

Every quarter a group meets it’s interesting to see how God works as you get to know each other better, apply God’s Word and encourage each other to grow. What are you looking forward to in your Life Group this quarter?

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE GROUPS

Life Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God’s Word. (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24-25). Here’s how it will happen:

SHARE

Each week we’ll take time to share what is happening in our lives.

At first this sharing will include planned “sharing questions.” But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY

Each week we’ll study a section from God’s Word that relates to the previous weekend’s sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

SUPPORT

Each week we’ll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms, such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another and meeting real needs.

SERVE

Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the community in which we live (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God’s Kingdom.